

most, that "while the earth remaineth," day and night, seed-time and harvest shall not cease. It is not always to remain. But there is a covenant whose blessings never fade:—"things present and things to come" are alike secured to all within its bond. Happy indeed are they who take hold of it! death shall not terminate their enjoyments, but enhance and augment them. But folly unutterable it is to rest in a temporary, fading portion, when by faith in the Saviour we might be assured no less of earth than of heaven, and of heaven than of earth. To whom is the world promised? It is to them that are Christ's, it is said, "All things are yours." "Seek first, said Christ, the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

3. The subject instructs us in the value both of personal and of social righteousness. Indirectly, thousands reap the fruits of Noah's faith—themselves strangers to his piety—and blessings innumerable crown the lot of the irreligious for righteous men's sake. But if the explanation, as we have seen, of the apparent failure of the promise in our text, be that God has, while assuring us of day and night, and summer and winter, reserved in his hands the rights of a moral administrator, we learn where to place the blame of unpropitious seasons—whether backward springs, or deficient harvests. It is sin that is the cause. It is the prayerlessness and unthankfulness and ungodliness of men. These seal up the heavens—these bring the moth, the caterpillar, the worm, the rust—God's great army, the ministers of his displeasure. I do not assert that personal righteousness or social is the title to life. Life in the full sense of the term is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. No sinner may hope for it otherwise. Union to him, as has just been said, is the tenure by which

earthly as well as heavenly good is alone held. Still, with personal and social righteousness as the fruit of faith, the promise connects both private and public prosperity. We must give proofs of faith; our walk must be with God, by faith. We have seen that Noah was a righteous man; not in the sense of being a believer only. And in many a passage of the Word of God we find the truth illustrated that righteousness, in the sense of holy living and holy walking, exalts, whether the individual or the nation. We conclude with a few proofs, out of many. Hear Isaiah. How describes he the man who has around him the everlasting arms? Chap. xxxiii.: "He that walketh righteously and speaketh up rightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." And of a land or people, as of an individual, hear Hosea, or Joel, or Malachi. The first, after this threatening of judgment on idolatry, "Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof—my wine—my wool—my flax"—thus assures and comforts his nation in connection with a time of revival and reform: "I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth. . . And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field; . . and I will break the bow and the sword, and make them to lie down safely. . . Thou shalt know the Lord. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel." So Malachi (chap. iii.). The nation had been cursed with a curse—the prophet